



United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management



Environmental Assessment CO500-05-016-EA

Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Record

San Luis Resource Area Travel Management Plan

***Location: Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Rio Grande, and Saguache
Counties Colorado***

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
San Luis Valley Public Lands Center
Monte Vista, Colorado
Phone: (719) 852-6260
FAX: (719) 852-6250

Finding of No Significant Impact

San Luis Valley Public Lands Center

INTRODUCTION:

This planning and analysis effort was begun due to the significant increase in user created routes on public lands on an annual basis. Habitat and natural resources that sustain healthy land processes necessary for a productive vegetative community, habitat, and wildlife populations were being impacted. Some conflict between user types was beginning to occur. Travel management planning and implementation from nearby Forests and BLM offices was moving some user types from those areas to areas such as the San Luis Valley where travel management practices were less restrictive. Several areas of concentrated use were being particularly impacted. Action was needed before the resource damages were irreversible.

It was recognized that the level of management was not providing the recreational opportunity and development that today's motorized public desired and this lower level of management was causing conflict with those publics using public lands in a non-motorized fashion.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis (EA No. CO500-05-0016-EA for a proposed action to address travel management planning in the San Luis Valley in Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Rio Grande, and Saguache Counties.

Action is needed to implement travel management planning that was intended to be developed through the San Luis Resource Area Resource Management Plan (SLRA RMP) (approved December 18, 1991) to change the area designations established under the SLRA RMP, establish a designated route system¹, to address other goals and objectives that were identified through public scoping and identify a travel management policy.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes travel management related actions to manage access to public lands in the San Luis Resource Area (SLRA) that provide for appropriate levels of administrative and public access while sustaining the health and diversity of public land resources. These actions are:

¹ "Designated route system" refers to the method of managing the transportation network in which the individual roads and trails (routes) are designated as open, limited or closed. OHVs are permitted to operate on all *designated* roads and trails which are identified as open to that motorized use, identified on travel maps and/or posted on the ground as routes that are available for motorized use under a *designated* travel management system.

- 1) Modify "Area" designations;
- 2) Designate a route system through the specific designation of routes;
- 3) Address other goals and objectives that were identified through public scoping;
- 4) Identify a travel management policy.

Modification of "Area" Designations

The first action considered under this analysis would be to modify the area designation in the San Luis Resource Area for Area #1 from the designation of "open" to a category of "Limited to Designated Roads and Trails". The exception to this change in Area #1 designation would be two small as yet unnamed "open" areas, 179 acres and 81.9 acres that would retain the "open" area designation. Those areas previously identified as closed areas would remain closed. Motorized and mechanized off-route (cross-country) travel would be eliminated. The effects of this proposed action on the areas outside of Area #1 would be as follows:

- The San Luis Hills WSA was closed to motorized and mechanized use under the SLRA RMP and will remain closed.
- The remaining eight areas in the San Luis Valley under the jurisdiction of BLM that were designated in the SLRA RMP as "limited" areas due to their ACEC designations will remain "limited".

The proposed action would establish designated travel routes for administrative and public uses and define the types of uses that are permitted on each route.

Snowmobiles would have the use of motorized routes, an open area north of Villa Grove, and designated and signed routes in the Poncha Pass area. They would not be allowed on motorized routes including cross-country in the closed area west of Villa Grove.

The SLRA RMP indicated that motorized travel within the ACECs would be limited to designated roads and trails, the designation of which was to occur during the activity level planning. This EA analyzes an amendment to the SLRA RMP planning document to address these and other remaining route designations.

The second action analyzed in this EA is the development of a travel management system of routes designated for specific uses. This action is represented as described in the EA as alternative C.

The 2,396,803 acre planning area is the San Luis Valley located north of Taos, NM, south of Poncha Springs, CO, and east of Pagosa, CO, and includes 520,945 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered public lands. Included within the planning area are:

- San Luis Hills Wilderness Study Area (WSA);
- Trickle Mountain, Blanca Wetlands, Elephant Rocks, Ra Jadero Canyon, Los Mogotes, San Luis Hills, Rio Grande River Corridor, and Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad Corridor Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs);
- Zapata Falls, Penitente Canyon, Rio Grande Corridor, and Blanca Wetlands Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs); and
- Sections of the Old Spanish Trail.

The Luis Maria Baca Land Grant, Great Sand Dunes National Park, Alamosa and Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuges, Russell Lakes Colorado State Refuge, and San Luis Lakes State Wildlife Area are located in the San Luis Valley, but are not under the jurisdiction of the BLM.

The SLRA includes 11 unique features that set the area apart from the surrounding region: the Rio Grande, Great Sand Dunes National Park, San Luis Hills WSA, Sangre de Cristo Wilderness, San Luis Lakes State Wildlife Area, Penitente Canyon Climbing Area, Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Old Spanish Trail, old Fort Garland, and Pikes Stockade.

The environmental assessment is attached and incorporated by reference in this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) determination. A no action alternative and three action alternatives were analyzed in the EA.

PLAN CONFORMANCE AND CONSISTENCY:

The proposed action and alternatives have been reviewed and found to be in conformance with the following BLM Land Use Plan: San Luis Resource Area Resource Management Plan approved 12/18/91. Locations of decisions from the Record of Decision are listed with a summary of the decision.

San Luis Valley General Area #1:

Page 13, paragraph 1-3, third subparagraph: Limited OHV designations in riparian zones.

- Page 15; paragraph 1-18: This is a series of four subparagraphs providing priorities for access easements.
- Page 15, paragraph 1-15: Paragraphs 1 through 3 discuss non-permissible and permissible locations for utility corridors. Utility corridors usually require motorized access.
- Page 15, paragraph 1-16: ROWs crossing riparian areas with impacts will be mitigated.

- Page 15, paragraph 1-17: Public lands are open to ROWs for utilities, roads, etc., and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- Page 16, paragraph 1-8: Identify and designate access corridors.
- Page 16, paragraph 1-20: The majority of lands in Area #1 will remain open or limited (seasonal, designated roads and trails) to vehicle travel. The WSA will be closed to motorized and mechanized travel. The public is encouraged to stay on roads. Designation of corridors that lead to RGNF, state lands, and private lands will be identified.
- Page 16, paragraph 1-21: Crucial big game winter and birthing areas designated as limited (seasonal) for OHV use.
- Page 16, paragraph 1-22: Manage area west of U.S. Highway 285 for VRM Class III to allow for utility corridor.
- Page 16, paragraph 1-23: Five eligible National Register sites will be closed to OHV use.

Trickle Mountain Area #2:

- Page 18, paragraph 2-4: Limited OHV use and all travel at other times to designated roads and trails. Existing OHV plan remains in affect.

Blanca Area #4:

- Page 20, paragraph 4-3: Limited OHV designations (seasonal and travel restricted to designated roads and trails per CRMAP) to maintain and protect significant values. Travel limited to existing roads and trails.
- Page 20, paragraph 4-4: A seasonal limitation in the ACEC from February 15 to July 15 is established.

Elephant Rocks Area #5:

- Page 21, paragraph 5-2: Limited OHV designations (seasonal limitations and travel restricted to designated roads and trails per CRMAP) to maintain and protect significant values. Travel limited to existing roads and trails.

La Jadero Canyon Area #6:

- Page 22, paragraph 6-2: Limited OHV designations (seasonal limitations and travel restricted to designated roads and trails per CRMAP) to maintain and protect significant values. Travel limited to existing roads and trails.

Los Mogotes Area #7:

- Page 23, paragraph 7-2: Limited OHV designations (seasonal limitations and travel restricted to designated roads and trails per CRMAP) to maintain and protect significant values. Travel limited to existing roads and trails.

San Luis Hills Area #8:

- Page 24, paragraph 8-4: Flat Top Mountain portion of ACEC will be closed to OHV use.
- Page 24: Rest of ACEC limited OHV designations (seasonal limitations and travel restricted to designated roads and trails per CRMAP) to maintain and protect significant values. Travel limited to existing roads and trails.

Rio Grande River Corridor Area #9:

- Page 25, paragraph 9-8: Limited OHV designations travel restricted to designated roads and trails per CRMAP to maintain and protect significant values. Travel limited to existing roads and trails.

Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad Corridor Area #10:

- Page 27, paragraph 10-4: Limited OHV designations (seasonal limitations and travel restricted to designated roads and trails per CRMAP) to maintain and protect significant values. Travel limited to existing roads and trails.

The Proposed Action has been reviewed for conformance with this plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3).

Public Land Health Standards: The Standards are addressed in the appropriate Affected Environment/Environmental Consequences sections.

CONFORMANCE TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES

The Proposed Action Alternative C conforms to the following statutes, regulations, policies, and guidelines:

FLPMA: In the *Declaration of Policy*, Section 102(a) and 102(a)(8) of the 1976 FLPMA, Congress set forth the policy statement that:

...it is the policy of the United States that —...the public lands be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archaeological values; that, where appropriate, will preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition; that will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals; and that will provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use.

National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicles Use on Public Lands: In 2001, the BLM issued a national strategy for providing guidance to *“determine and implement better on-the-ground motorized off-highway vehicles management solutions designed to conserve soil, wildlife, water quality, native vegetation, air quality, heritage resources, and other resources, while providing for appropriate motorized recreational opportunities.”*

Instruction Memorandum No. 2004-005: In October of 2003, the BLM through an Instruction Memorandum emphasized policy and provided clarification and additional guidance for management of motorized and other access on the public lands in accordance with existing law, executive orders, proclamation, regulation, and policy. Within this context, this memorandum, states that *“Selection of a network of roads and trails should be performed for all limited areas in each RMP. This requires establishment of a process that includes selecting specific roads and trails within the limited area or sub-area and specifying limitation(s) placed on use.”*

Public Land Health Standards: In January 1997, Colorado BLM adopted the Public Lands Health Standards (Standards) in all of their RMPs. The Standards described natural resource conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. They encompass upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species (T&E), and water quality. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an EA. These findings are located in specific resource elements listed below. A copy of the Standards is contained in Appendix 4 and is available for review at the San Luis Public Lands Center in Monte Vista, Colorado.

Recreation Management Guidelines to Meet Public Land Health Standards: In December 2000, Colorado BLM issued Recreation Management Guidelines (Guidelines) to help achieve and maintain healthy public lands as defined by the Public Land Health Standards. These Guidelines are tools, methods, and techniques that can be used by managers to maintain or meet the Standards. A copy of the Guidelines is contained in Appendix 5 and is available for review at the San Luis Public Lands Center in Monte Vista, Colorado.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT DETERMINATION:

I have determined based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, that the project is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects described in the San Luis Resource Area RMP/FEIS. An environmental impact statement is not needed. This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project.

Context: The project area, 520,945 acres, analyzed is the public lands administrated by the BLM within the planning area, 2,396,354 acres including private, state, county, and other Federal agency lands considered to be the San Luis Valley, region. Travel management plans are broad-level planning documents that do not typically involve site-specific impacts. The travel management decisions analyzed in this EA potentially affects the local region described above. The action will not have impacts at the international, national, or state level. The implementation of this planning is both immediate (change of category from open to limited) and long term (designation and implementation of travel management planning based upon route designation). Potentially significant impacts were mitigated by project design or mitigation measures.

There are many activities in the San Luis Valley which impact renewable natural resources. Sub-division development, farming, communities/urban areas, many roads to support these activities are present in and around the private properties in the Valley. The reduction in undisturbed and undissected habitat because of this situation means that travel management on public lands is a significant issue. The value of unbisected habitat and undisturbed natural resource and wildlife populations is of great concern. This EA analyzed the situation in the planning area (region). Recreational opportunity and public access were analyzed in the context of providing quality habitat and minimal disturbance to populations and resources. The quality of habitat, riparian areas, and water which are dependent upon other resource factors (for example soils, erosion, grazing and other commercial uses) was a serious consideration in light of the activities associated in the Valley with the development and use of private lands. It was necessary to reach a balance between public access, travel management, and protection and improvement of the quality and quantity of habitat and other renewable natural resources.

The San Luis Valley has avoided until now many of the impacts associated with the development of urban areas on the eastern front range and western slope of Colorado. Some of these activities are beginning to occur. It is expected that further development of private property will go beyond farming and ranch which is the traditional use. This increased development of sub-divisions, manufacturing, and support structure/services will increase demands on the public lands by an increasing population. Recent years have seen an increase in recreational users from the eastern front range in spite of the distance and time to arrive in the Valley. This planning effort provides an opportunity to keep pace with the demands of the recreation with an every increasing population. The public lands will provide opportunity under this planning effort that will not be met on private property.

Some interactions and impacts will occur between public lands users such as grazing permittees, timber harvest, mineral development, and recreationists. This planning effort will mitigate some of the resulting conflicts.

Intensity: The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27 and incorporated into BLM's Critical Elements of the Human Environment list (H-1790-1), and supplemental Instruction Memorandum, Acts, regulations and Executive Orders. The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal:

Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. This action will concentrate more users on those roads and trails which are open to the public. This will have little impact in the near future. However, this will create the potential for cumulative impacts over time. Each open or limited route was evaluated and mitigation considered including monitoring so the agency would remain alert for the necessity of additional modification with increased use. This plan will minimize the potential for the public to take motorized vehicles across unroaded terrain and will reduce the potential number of areas and routes available for OHV activities. This impact was mitigated by providing access routes to a variety of users such that virtually every area could be accessed by a motorized conveyance except the WSA. The access provided reduced this impact to the public below the significant level. The increased concentration of OHVs on fewer routes could lead to an increase in motorized accidents. This possibility was considered and rejected due to the conditions and low speed of travel on maintained and designated routes.

There are numerous benefits from this planning effort and the designation of a travel management system. There is a substantial benefit to wildlife habitat from the elimination of authorized cross country travel in undeveloped areas. This habitat will not be impacted nor will further habitat be dissected with additional user created routes. The reduction in the number of routes on highly erodible soils, within watersheds, reduced routes in riparian areas, and a reduction in stream crossings will be a substantial benefit to the health and productivity of the public lands. This planning effort will allow the BLM to methodically analyze any potential unauthorized route development and usage.

The proposed action would impact resources as described in the EA. Mitigating measures to reduce impacts to wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species habitat, aquatic wildlife, migratory bird habitat, range management, air quality, cultural resources, flood plains, wetlands, and riparian zones, invasive non-native species, Native American religious concerns, vegetation, water quality and hydrology, transportation, visual resources, and paleontological resources were incorporated in the design of the action alternatives. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA and associated appendices are considered significant, nor do the effects exceed those described in the San Luis Resource Area Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Limiting OHV use to designated routes will reduce the opportunity for cross country travel in undeveloped terrain. This is not a significant impact to public land users as other opportunities are available in the greater regional area. This area is known for dispersed recreational opportunities such as fishing, hunting, and camping. This action planned for improved quality of this opportunity and an improved experience. A variety of restrictions allow for some use of non-motorized, mechanical users on routes without motorized travel though to a lesser extent. The public will continue to enjoy access to all public lands in the planning area. The impact to access and recreational opportunity is not significant.

This planning effort did reduce the number of routes and miles of routes. Many of these routes did not have a purpose and were duplicate routes which were impacting natural resources, wildlife, and habitats. Route closures and the limitation of users will have a significant improvement on the bisected wildlife habitat, riparian zones, and water quality. There were lesser improvements of a site specific nature that will improve soil health, reduce erosion, and improve vegetation, and other natural resource cycles.

The public and internal scoping process identified five key issues which should be addressed through travel management planning: provide appropriate and reasonable access, achieve compliance with the plan, abate the proliferation of user-created routes and the cumulative impacts of OHV activities, reduce user conflicts, and respond to population growth with the associated increased use on public lands. This plan specifically addresses each of these concerns through the planning effort.

The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety. The proposed action is designed not to effect public health and safety. Increased monitoring of OHV use and the condition of motorized routes will be implemented on many routes as identified with the potential for degradation. Further action will be taken should it be determined from this monitoring that impacts to routes, natural resources, or public health and safety are occurring. Some routes will have modified maintenance to improve the route or the safety for the public as was identified during the planning process.

Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas. The process used by the Interdisciplinary Team to evaluate travel routes took into account cultural, historical, and scientific sites and objects protected by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Systematic consideration of mitigation and/or limited access designation addressed resource impacts associated with cultural and historic resources. The closure and reduction of unmanaged cross-country travel, called for in Alternative C will serve to significantly protect historic properties across a broad landscape. Known but as-yet-unrecorded sites and areas considered to have a high probability for cultural resources were considered in the route analysis process. Because of the large number of existing routes that will be designated within the project area the BLM will use a phased approach to complete the inventory, evaluation, and treatment of cultural resources after the TMP is completed.

The Sand Dunes National Park is close to Public lands. Consideration was given in the planning process not to allow access through a back road or trail that might be create an illegal access to the park. The Sangre De Cristo Wilderness in on the Rio Grande Forest adjacent to the public lands managed by the BLM. Forest Service recreation staff and managers were brought in during and after the planning process in order to coordinate access across public lands to the wilderness and to insure that access was not facilitated where inappropriate to or onto the wilderness as indicated by the Forest Service.

The wetlands on the public lands in the San Luis Valley are fairly limited. This planning effort on a route by route basis carefully considered impacts, mitigation, and maintenance in order to improve the health of riparian zones and streams. This effort included analysis on a watershed basis and evaluation of route densities in these areas. Specific mitigation and monitoring was developed for many routes crossing or adjacent to wetlands. There are three particularly important wetlands on public lands. The Blanca Wetlands ACEC and the included Meshak Lakes and McIntire/Simpson wetlands have completed activity plans addressing travel management. The La Garita property does not have an activity plan, but has been developed with cooperators to improve riparian zones, and stream bank stability. The Rio Grande is a designated natural area, SRMA, and an ACEC. Recently a Rio Grande Corridor Plan was completed. The travel management planning effort sought to support, address, and improve travel management in these areas.

The San Luis Hills WSA is in the area and planning was conducted to continue to maintain the characteristics of that area for potential wilderness designation. There are several ACECs: Cumbres and Toltec railroad, Rio Grande Corridor, Elephant Rocks, Trickle Mountain, Blanca Wetlands Area, Los Mogotes, San Luis Hills, and Ra Jadero. During the planning the primary purpose for this designation was revisited and planning was conducted to support the purpose for the designation as an ACEC. Route proliferation and the low level of travel management were having some impact in the ACECs. Several ACECs had significant impact from motorized OHV use. The planning effort sought to reverse this situation. Mitigation and design measures were developed to implement actions to support the ACEC management goals.

The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial. Travel management planning is a standard practice in the BLM. The benefits of travel management planning and implementation are known and documented. This practice and the results are not new in the scientific community or to the public and the BLM. There are some political concerns with travel management as there are with any activity and planning effort on public lands. This is particularly true for actions which reduce the availability of an activity even when that activity is creating negative impacts. The resource need for healthy processes, protection from irreversible damage, and repair and improvement from previous damage outweigh the political concerns created by restricted use as identified in the two decisions which are the purpose for the EA.

The public and internal scoping process identified five key issues which should be addressed through travel management planning: provide appropriate and reasonable access, achieve compliance with the plan, abate the proliferation of user-created routes and the cumulative impacts of OHV activities, reduce user conflicts, and respond to population growth with the associated increased use on public lands. This plan specifically addresses each of these concerns through the planning effort.

The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. The project is not unique or unusual. Travel management planning is standard practice in the BLM. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the EA. The benefits and advantages are known and documented. There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. The actions considered in the alternative were analyzed by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the selected alternative and all other alternatives is described in Chapter 4 of the EA. The action will not establish precedence for future actions with significant effects.

Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts – which include connected actions regardless of land ownership. The interdisciplinary team evaluated the possible actions in context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions. Some individual impacts were identified, but did not accumulate with any other impacts. Any potential significant cumulative impacts were identified and addressed through project design or mitigation such that significant impacts will not occur. Therefore, significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete disclosure of the effects of the project is contained in Chapter 4 of the EA.

The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. The project will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. A cultural inventory will be conducted in conjunction with other projects which have roads and trail associated with them. Any surface disturbance to construct a new road or to rehabilitate and revegetate a two track never disturbed will have a completed inventory prior to any surface disturbance. Consultation with SHPO was not completed which in conformance with the addendum to the state protocol agreement between the Colorado State Director of the BLM and the Colorado SHPO

regarding implantation of Colorado BLM's travel management program. A site specific consultation will be completed prior to any surface disturbance as indicated above.

The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, or the degree to which the action may adversely affect: 1) a proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or its habitat, or 2) a species on BLM's sensitive species list. Mitigating measures and project designs to reduce impacts to wildlife, fisheries, migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, and BLM sensitive species have been incorporated into the design of the action alternatives. Although seven listed species threatened and endangered species and 33 species on BLM's sensitive species occupy habitat within the project boundary, it has been determined that they will not be adversely affected. No other threatened or endangered plants or animals are known to occur in the area. Section 7 ESA Consultation with US Fish and Wildlife Service was completed. USF&WS has concurred with BLM's determination.

Summary of Effects Determination for Federally Listed Species					
Species	Status	Proposed Action			
Bald Eagle	FT	NLAA			
Black-footed Ferret	FE	NE			
Canada Lynx	FT	NLAA			
Gunnison Sage-grouse	FC	NLJ			
Mexican Spotted Owl	FE	NE			
Southwestern Willow Flycatcher	FE	NLAA			
Uncompaghre Fritillary Butterfly	FE	NE			
Yellow-billed cuckoo	FC	NLJ			
Species Status Key: FE = Federally Endangered FT = Federally Threatened FC = Federal Candidate NE = No Effect NLAA = May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect LAA= May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect NLJ= Not Likely to Jeopardize (Candidate species) None= Species habitat is not present or species is known not to be present					

All action alternatives provide different degrees of secure core habitat for bald eagles. All action alternatives restrict cross-country vehicle travel and reduce the risk of current and future harassment to bald eagles that could be associated with route proliferation. Individual disturbances cannot be completely discounted but can be managed to reduce impacts below the level of take if and when they occur.

The black-footed ferret is extirpated and there are no current plans to reintroduce this species to the San Luis Valley. Potential effects on this species will not occur even when only assessing potential future habitat.

All action alternatives provide different degrees of secure core habitat for Canada lynx. All action alternatives restrict cross-country vehicle travel and reduce the risk of negative impacts on habitat. Some discountable negative effects may still occur because of the route network proposed (these proposed route networks are based upon already existent routes) in each action alternative.

All action alternatives provide different degrees of secure core habitat for the Mexican spotted owl. All action alternatives restrict cross-country vehicle travel and reduce the risk of negative impacts on habitat. Proposed Action Alternative C reduces the routes to a level that reduces potential impacts.

All action alternatives provide different degrees of secure core habitat for southwestern willow flycatchers. Although some discountable negative effects may still occur because of the route network proposed in each action alternative, all action alternatives reduce the total route mileage, restrict cross-country vehicle travel, and reduce the risk of negative impacts on habitat. Some discountable negative effects may still occur because of the road network proposed in each action alternative.

All action alternatives provide different degrees of secure core habitat for yellow-billed cuckoos. All action alternatives restrict cross-country vehicle travel and reduce the risk of negative impacts on habitat. Some negative effects may still occur because of the road network proposed in each action alternative.

Colorado BLM State Director's Sensitive Species List (2001): Effects Analysis					
Species	Status	Proposed Action Alternative C			
REPTILES/ AMPHIBIANS					
Milk Snake	BLM Sensitive	NI			
Northern Leopard Frog	BLM Sensitive	BI			
Texas Horned Lizard	BLM Sensitive	NI			
MAMMALS					
Big Free-tailed Bat	BLM Sensitive	NI			
Townsend's Big-eared Bat	BLM Sensitive	NI			
Yuma Myotis	BLM Sensitive	NI			
BIRDS					
American White Pelican	BLM Sensitive	NI			
Barrow's Goldeneye	BLM Sensitive				
Black Tern	BLM Sensitive				
Ferruginous Hawk	BLM Sensitive	NI			
Gunnison Sage-Grouse	BLM Sensitive	MI			
Long-billed Curlew	BLM Sensitive				
Mountain Plover	BLM Sensitive	NI			
Northern Goshawk	BLM Sensitive	NI			
Western Snowy Plover	BLM Sensitive				
Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo	BLM Sensitive	NI			
White-faced Ibis	BLM Sensitive				
FISH					
Flathead Chub	BLM Sensitive	NI			
Rio Grande Chub	BLM Sensitive	NI			
Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout	BLM Sensitive	NI			
Definition of State Sensitive Species Determinations: BI = Beneficial Impact NI = No Impact MI = May Impact (May Impact Individuals, but is not likely to cause a trend towards Federal listing or loss of viability in the planning area) LI = Likely Impact (Likely to result in a trend towards Federal listing or a loss of viability in the planning area) None = Species habitat is not present or species is known not to be present					

Wetland Species Determinations:					
Species	Status	Proposed Action Alternative C			
BIRDS					
American White Pelican	BLM Sensitive	MI			
Barrow's Goldeneye	BLM Sensitive	MI			
Black Tern	BLM Sensitive	MI			
Long-billed Curlew	BLM Sensitive	MI			
Western Snowy Plover	BLM Sensitive	MI			
Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo	BLM Sensitive				
White-faced Ibis	BLM Sensitive	MI			
REPTILES/ AMPHIBIANS					
Northern Leopard Frog	BLM Sensitive	MI			
FISH					
Rio Grande chub	BLM Sensitive	MI			
MAMMALS					
Big Free Tailed Bat	BLM Sensitive	NI			
Townsend's Big-eared bat	BLM Sensitive	NI			
Yuma Myotis	BLM Sensitive	NI			
Definition of State Sensitive Species Determinations:					
NI = No Impact					
MI = May Impact (May Impact Individuals, but is not likely to cause a trend towards Federal listing or loss of viability in the planning area)					
BI = Beneficial Impact					
LI = Likely Impact (Likely to result in a trend towards Federal listing or a loss of viability in the planning area)					
None = Species habitat is not present or species is known not to be present					

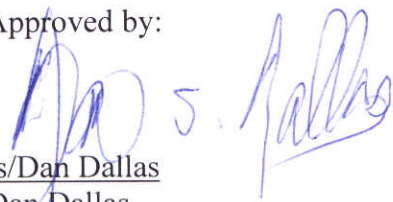
The findings for BLM sensitive species is determined due to the moderate amount of benefit provided by the proposed action.

Whether the action threatens a violation of a federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where non-federal requirements are consistent with federal requirements.

The project does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. State, local, and tribal interests were given the opportunity to participate in the environmental analysis process. Letters were sent to 14 Native American tribes concerning consulting party status, and there was one request for a copy of the draft maps reflecting the proposed designation by alternatives. Further response has not been received. The project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.

The context and intensity of the proposed action supports the legal mandates as well as the direction outlined in the SLRA_RMP. Therefore, based on the analysis provided in the SLRA TMP-EA and the requirements set forth in the SLRA-RMP I hereby approve the Finding of No Significant Impact resulting from the assessment of the Proposed Action, Alternative C.

Approved by:



/s/Dan Dallas

Dan Dallas

Center Manager

San Luis Valley Public Lands Center

June 3, 2008

Date